

BOOKS

Book reviews and books of interest to "Tobacco Control" should be sent to the editor at the address given on the inside front cover.

Tobacco and women's health

Tobacco and women's health. Hannu Vierola. Helsinki Finland: Art House Oy, ISBN 951-884-236-1.

This book contains everything you want to know about tobacco and women's health. Vierola has put together a readable, comprehensive volume that goes far beyond what one might expect from a medical specialist, or from a book on tobacco and women's health. Only the exceptional emphasis on the benefits of hormone replacement therapy betrays the author's primary specialisation in obstetrics and gynaecology. The author covers health effects, but also includes advice on quitting, policy initiatives, and issues in developing countries.

Despite considerable referencing of the scientific literature, *Tobacco and women's health* is very much a popular book. Open it anywhere and there is something that grabs your attention. It is an easy read and does not suffer from the kind of pedantry that often characterises the academic literature. But it is also directive and delivers advice as the doctor ordered, a feature that might put off some readers looking for a more impartial account.

With an introduction by Margaretha Haglund that focuses on the history of advertising and women's smoking, Vierola launches into a whirlwind tour of the topic. Chapter 1, for example, is titled "Smoking frequency among women", but also includes the effect of advertising and women's magazines on women's smoking, how lung cancer became an "equal opportunity" disease, a discussion of the relative importance of price and education strategies, and a section on World Health Organization

and US anti-smoking campaigns. This is punctuated by boxed quotes on a number of different topics.

There are nine chapters on the effects of smoking on various diseases and body systems, as well as chapters on initiation, cessation, and the role of health care professionals. A final chapter provides relevant web addresses for those seeking further information. The book is also indexed. It includes a sprinkling of cartoons, photos, and maxims for smokers ("When you can't breathe, nothing else matters"—American Lung Association).

The book is remarkably broad, including both detailed medical advice and clear thinking on policy, but there are inaccuracies and unsupported statements. The section on cigarettes as a gateway drug draws unwarranted conclusions, as does the section on the effects of advertising bans. At one point, the author says there are no risks of nicotine replacement therapy to the fetus, but we know that nicotine has a detrimental effect on prenatal neurological development. There is also a heavy reliance on single studies, leaving the reader to wonder about the generalisability of the findings. Readers should be cautioned that an accurate account of what is currently accepted might require consulting various surgeon general's reports.

Referencing is inconsistent. While two Finnish studies on light cigarettes are cited, Kozlowski's filter blocking studies in the same paragraph are unacknowledged. Much of the information is not well digested, and many sections hop from topic to topic. A good editor would have made a difference here. While this is generally not desirable in a book, it may serve to keep the channel flipping reader involved.

Despite these drawbacks, Vierola's book is generally solid and could be recommended for the non-academic reader seeking understanding of tobacco and women's health and the larger context of smoking for both women and men. It may well pique the interest of the casual reader and lead to a more in depth search of the growing literature on tobacco control.

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Double indemnity: making sense of the US settlement

Assuming the risk: the mavericks, the lawyers, and the whistle-blowers who beat big tobacco. Michael Orey. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1999. ISBN 0-316-66489-8. 371 pages, \$24.95.

Symposium—Tobacco regulations: the convergence of law, medicine & public health. William Mitchell Law Review, Patrick J Gallagher, ed. 1999;25:373-767. Saint Paul, Minnesota: William Mitchell Law Review. Single issues available from 875 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105, USA. 394 pages, \$8.50.

No great task is done in a moment, encapsulated in the actions of a few characters, or caught in but one small



emotion. Those who have been engaged with the war against tobacco dependence, commonly called smoking, know this and will find many lessons about this struggle in *Assuming the risk*, and what I shall call *The convergence essays*. Reviewing these two books was a learning experience for me since I am not a lawyer. But you will not find me trying to teach the legal arguments from these books. What these books do provide for me is some insight into how lawyers in Mississippi and Minnesota established cases that moved the tobacco industry to settle with all US states for \$246 billion.

Assuming the risk is a tell all book that centres on the personalities of the Mississippi legal drama against the tobacco industry. The first two portions of this book centre on Don Barrett, a lawyer with a mission against the tobacco industry, and Merrell Williams, a whistle blower whose copied Brown and Williamson documents played an important part in exposing tobacco industry lies. The final portion brings the diverse elements from the earlier stories together and to a conclusion.

Let me begin by saying that this is an enjoyable read. The development of the setting and background of the main characters draws the reader into the story. The personality development is detailed enough so that we can relate to the characters, and sometimes feel their emotion and understand their thinking. The best way to show this is to give you a glimpse of the portrayals.

For example, from Don Barrett, the born again Christian speaking briefly at the funeral of his client, Nathan Horton: "The American Tobacco Company may have thought its troubles were over when Nathan died. I have a message for them: Their troubles are just beginning, because Nathan's family have picked up that banner that says justice and they are marching with it, and Fred Clark (a fellow attorney) and I are proud to be marching with them. I say this to the American Tobacco Company: We're coming at you, we're not gonna stop, you can run but you can't hide. I

